



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6102.0 - Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2001

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 18/05/2001 Ceased

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INTRODUCTION

10.1 This chapter discusses the concepts, definitions and sources of job vacancies data. Job vacancies are an indicator of labour demand. They complement indicators of oversupply of labour such as unemployment (Chapter 6) and underemployment (Chapter 5).

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

10.2 There are no international recommendations or guidelines relating to job vacancies statistics. However, it has been suggested¹ that it is fairly simple to develop a definition of a 'vacant post' which parallels the definition of an 'unemployed person'. The concept of vacant post was discussed in the general report to the Fifteenth ICLS 1993 where the following definition was put forward: "a 'vacant post' can be said to exist if an employer before or during the reference period has taken concrete steps to find a suitable person to carry out a specific set of tasks and would have taken on (entered into a job contract with) such a person if she/he had been available during the reference period".

1. E. Hoffman, "Measuring the demand for labour", in *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1992-1, ILO, Geneva 1991.

10.3 Job vacancies statistics are collected in the ABS Job Vacancies Survey, a business survey. It has been ABS practice to define job vacancies as **employee jobs available for immediate filling** on the actual survey reference day and **for which employers have undertaken recruitment action**. Recruitment action includes efforts to fill vacancies by advertising, by factory notices, by notifying public or private employment agencies or trade unions and by contacting, interviewing or selecting applicants already registered with the business or organisation.

10.4 Measures of job vacancies exclude: jobs which became vacant on the survey reference day and were filled on the same day; jobs of less than one day's duration; jobs only available to be filled by persons already hired, or by promotion or transfer of existing employees; jobs to be filled by persons returning from paid or unpaid leave or after industrial dispute(s); jobs for work to be carried out by contractors or staff from contract labour agencies; and jobs for which a person has been appointed but has not yet commenced duty.

10.5 The job vacancy rate is calculated by expressing the number of job vacancies as a percentage of the number of employee jobs plus vacancies.

DATA SOURCES

10.6 Estimates of job vacancies are available from:

- the ABS Job Vacancies Survey;
- the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) series based on counts of newspaper

advertisements and Internet advertisements; and

- the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business Vacancy Report incorporating: the Skilled Vacancies Index based on counts of newspaper advertisements for skilled vacancies; the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Vacancies Index based on Internet advertisements for ICT vacancies on selected employment Internet sites; and Vacancies on Australian Job Search (AJS) based on Internet advertisements for job vacancies on the AJS employment Internet site.

JOB VACANCIES SURVEY

10.7 Estimates from this survey are produced according to the definitions outlined above. For more information on the data content and methodology of this survey refer to Chapter 25.

ANZ SERIES

10.8 The ANZ produces two series, one based on newspaper advertisements placed in major metropolitan newspapers, the other on Internet advertisements carried on selected employment Internet sites. Readers should refer to **Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Limited, ANZ Job Advertisement Series**, for more detail on the content and methodology of these series.

VACANCY REPORT - DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND SMALL BUSINESS

10.9 The Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business produces three series, the Skilled Vacancies Index, the ICT Vacancies Index, and the Vacancies on Australian Job Search series (see paragraph 10.6). Readers should refer to **Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Vacancy Report** for more detail on the content and methodology of these series.

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This page last updated 9 February 2006

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